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West Virginia NRCS News and Views

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
August 2006

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[**West Virginia NRCS Respond to Utah's Assistance Call**](#)

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[...More Info](#)

[**Bermudagrass \(*Cynodon dactylon*\) Grassland Project Plan Update**](#)



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WV Rural Development Newsletter, Dust, Drought, Degradation, Desperation & the Great Depression, Mid-Atlantic Regional Water Program Website, The PLANTS Gallery.

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[Bits and Pieces](#)

Bruce Knight, Morgantown Parking Allocation, Backyard Conservation Invitations, Updated Letterhead and Guidance for using NRCS' New Mission Statement, WV NRCS Web.

[...More Info](#)

[Meet](#)



Diana Rivas, Public Service Leader's Scholarship student trainee.

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[West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation](#)

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Conservation Education

The WV Save Our Streams web page is revised. Some new additions include a *Field Guide to Macroinvertebrates*, an *Alternate Survey Method Manual*, and *Guidelines for Preparing a Stream Study Design*.

[...More Info](#)

Upcoming Events (PDF)

To submit news items for the November *News and Views*, please send an e-mail message to [Carol Lagodich](#)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment.

NRCS West Virginia State Office

75 High Street Room, 301, Morgantown, WV 26505

304-284-7540 | fax 304-284-4839

<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Ronald L Hilliard, West Virginia State Conservationist

NRCS field offices are located throughout West Virginia

Visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/> for addresses and phone numbers.

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Message from Ron Hilliard

NRCS is increasing public awareness of how agriculture is doing its part to protect water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. We are stressing the benefits of on-farm conservation efforts, the advantages of moving toward a watershed approach, and the need for cooperative conservation to achieve water quality improvements in the Bay and elsewhere.

Like all of the Bay States, West Virginia has been actively involved in pollution reduction programs for over twenty years. NRCS gets conservation done on the ground. Farm Bill programs, including Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, (FRPP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and FSA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program CREP have outstanding success stories. These programs are designed to help people help the land.

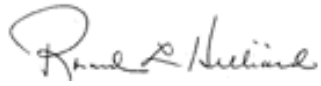
NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants awarded West Virginia University more than \$1 million for three projects to help farmers and other business owners improve the state's water quality while they conserve energy dollars. Our specialists will work closely with WVU, private businesses, and other members of the network as they develop and test projects to improve the Potomac Watershed and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.

As representatives of West Virginia NRCS, we need to communicate what we are doing to make positive impacts on the Bay. We can provide consistent, accurate information to landowners, stakeholders, and decision makers.

The Chesapeake Bay is America's largest estuary. It is almost 200 miles long and from 3 to roughly 30 miles wide. The Bay Watershed includes six states: New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia. West Virginia is a headwaters partner. Fourteen percent (14%) of West Virginia drains into the Potomac River and on to the Chesapeake Bay. WV also has James River headwaters area.

I want you all to know that I appreciate the cooperation, hard work and dedication you

are showing to achieving the goals established for West Virginia NRCS. The application of conservation practices is an important step in implementing the new NRCS Strategic Plan.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ron Helms". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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West Virginia NRCS Updates

Farm Bill Programs

CSP

- Seventy-three (73) of seventy-five (75) 2006 applications are funded.
- \$171,427.00 paid out in 2006 funds.

EQIP

- Ended the ranking period with 903 applications in ProTracts, with an estimated value of \$12.8 million.
- 244 contracts funded with \$5,519,765.00 of available funds.

WHIP

- Ended ranking with 183 applications, with an estimated value of \$1.6 million.
- 80 contracts funded with \$924,465.50 in available funds.

AMA

- Ended ranking with 22 applications in the Chesapeake Bay watershed with an estimated value of \$276,263.
- Original allocation of \$146,234.00 plus additional allocation of \$108,430.00 has currently funded 35 contracts at \$186,090.50.
- Additional contracts being developed.

GRP

- Grassland Reserve Program is at the funding cap so no new applications will be accepted. We are working to finalize the funded applications in FY 2005 and to finalize the 2003 and 2004 easements.

WRP

- Currently seeking construction bids on Upshur County site to complete restoration.
- Appraisals requested on sites in Hancock and Hampshire Counties.
- Revising plans on Taylor County site; hope to complete construction this fall.
- Three sites in Jefferson County:
 - One completed this spring.
 - One site to finish restoration with seeding this summer.
 - One site under negotiation to complete restoration this summer.

FRPP

- 2006 allocation is \$1,869,726.00.
- 8 high quality properties were funded
- \$26 million in applications for 2006 on 27 properties.
- To date over \$6.9 million in FRPP funds committed to county FP Boards and Land Trusts (3); on 6,300 acres of land and approximately 5,000 acres of that are prime, statewide or locally important soils.

Resources

Certified Conservation Planner Certification- Rick Heaslip, Barbara McWhorter, Casey D. Shrader, and Isaac Wolford have provided conservation planning training to our experienced planners to insure continuation of high quality planning. Each participant is required to submit one plan for review.

Water Resources

Lost River Site 16 (Hardy County)

- Work is progressing well on the Supplemental Plan-EIS.
- Currently working through NEPA process; anticipate final report by Fall 2006.
- Schedule:
 - sign Project Agreement January 2007
 - design completed in Spring 2007
 - initiate construction Summer 2007
 - complete construction in 2010

Dunloup Creek (Fayette County)

- Planning work progressing; awaiting comments on NRCS internal review.
- Will schedule public workshop in Summer/Fall 2007.
- Continue to regularly meet with DCWA and give public updates.
- High interest in voluntary buyout option.

Rehabilitation Program

- Completed 6 of 9 Rehabilitation Assessments.
- Funding is very competitive; requested FY07 monies to initiate Rehab Plan.

Elkwater Fork Water Supply Dam (Randolph County)

- Construction began in May.
- Contractor making good progress with foundation excavation as the major component of work.
- Schedule is to get foundation and associated work completed this year with the RCC dam construction to begin in March of 2007.
- The major portion of the work should be completed by December 2007.

North Fork Hughes River Recreation (Ritchie County)

- Currently advertising for bids for two contracts; sewage treatment plant and camping area.
- Bids were due 20 Jul 06.
- Construction should begin in August.

Upper Deckers Creek AMD (Preston and Monongalia Counties)

- Currently advertising for bids for two sites.
- Bids are due 22 Aug 06.
- Reclamation should begin in early October.
- Consultant is working on first phase of the Richard Mine discharge study through a contract with the Monongahela Conservation District.

Little Whitestick Channel Improvements, Raleigh County

- Design complete for Phase 3.
- Anticipate bid advertisement early July; contract award by 30 Sep 06.
- Work should begin in October.
- This the final phase of the Little Whitestick Channel.

Soil Survey Update

- The soil survey staff continues to develop digital data for the Web Soil Survey.
 - Lincoln County, WV was recently posted to the Web Soil Survey.
 - The goal is to have the entire state on the web by 2007.
- The staff continues to develop the database to support the Web Soil Survey.
 - By July 15th, they had all 55 counties in the state populated with data that generates soil descriptions online.
 - This is the next step toward the "paperless" soil survey report (online).
- Four NRCS staff presented four papers at The World Congress of Soil Science in Philadelphia in July.

- The soil staff completed 132,000 acres of update mapping in West Virginia during the third quarter ending June 30th.
- Soil Survey continues to refine soil interpretations for animal mortality and drought.

Chesapeake Bay

Three NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants were funded.

- **Gasification of Poultry Litter to Produce Bio-Energy for Heat** is a collaboration led by Coaltec Energy USA Inc. and Frye Poultry in Hardy County.
 - WVU will monitor the bio-energy data, develop and implement a transfer plan, and develop an economic evaluation of the technology.
- **Development and Implementation of a Water Quality Bank and Trade Program for the Potomac River Watershed, WV.**
 - The project will introduce a pollutant reduction trading program in West Virginia communities in the Potomac Valley. Credits will be earned for reducing polluted discharges. The credits can be traded between farmers and industrial facilities or public service districts.
 - The pollution credit trades are expected to create a net improvement in the Potomac River watershed's water quality and benefit local economies.
- **Utilization and Management of Invasive Plants in Pastures Using Biocontrol Agents** is a collaboration that is testing farmers' use of goats and sheep—biocontrol agents—to manage aggressive weeds.
 - The strategy is expected to reduce dependence on pesticides and fossil fuel and convert weed biomass to marketable produce.

The grants are dollar-for-dollar matches, bringing the projects' total value to more than \$2.3 million.

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From the Field

Mountain Resources Conservation and Development Area

The Mountain RC&D just entered into cooperative agreements with Wolfpen Knob Development Company and WV NRCS to develop conservation plans for coal mine mitigation on the Elk River Watershed. This project is being evaluated for potential income for the RC&D and the opportunity for NRCS to direct mitigation funds for crucial conservation needs.

Over the past 3 months Mountain RC&D working the Operation Sharing program has delivered to its counties an estimated \$1 million worth of donated school supplies to area teachers and educators.



To the left is distribution setup up by Council member Bobbie Meadows in Braxton County.



Volunteer prison labor from the Flatwoods regional jail assisted with the setup and distribution.

For more information contact [Mike Gasper](#) at the [Mountain RC&D Office](#).


Land Judging

Submitted by Wendy Noll

West Virginia 4-H land judging teams received top honors once again at the National Land and Range Judging Competition held recently in Oklahoma City, OK. Jared

Nestor's (Soil Conservationist at the Glenville Service Center) father, West Virginia University Extension Agent Roger Nestor, coached the national champion Barbour County team. For more information go to <http://www.wvu.edu/~exten/infores/newsrel/2006/060517-01.htm>

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West Virginia NRCS Respond to Utah's Assistance Call

Submitted by Tom Tamasco



In January 2005, Washington County, Utah, experienced severe flooding that occurred due to heavy winter rain showers combined with snow pack run-off. The devastating floods caused the loss of approximately 25 homes and one life. Several bridges were destroyed and miles of utilities were displaced or washed away.

The Utah NRCS responded with damage survey report teams and a request for federal EWP Program funding. Assistance was requested from NRCS by Washington County. In March of 2006 West Virginia NRCS responded to Utah's call for assistance by detailing 15 employees to the St. George, Utah area for 30–60 day work assignments. St. George is located in southwest Utah close to the Arizona and Nevada state lines. Because of the limited availability of long term lodging 12 of our employees stayed in Mesquite, Nevada and commuted to St. George. The 38 mile drive encompassed driving across three state lines and crossing one time zone.

Our task was to assist with the construction phase of the work which consisted mainly of rock stabilization walls with some debris removal. While daily duties could vary it was mainly involved with the tracking of rock from the quarry to the job site then the placement of the same in the stability wall. Some employees operated scales that weighted and documented the loaded rock trucks leaving the quarry; other employees received tickets from the truck drivers entering the job site that they documented. Employees acting as inspectors oversaw the placement of the rock and the construction of the wall and others were project engineers with duties such as: making partial payments, attending meetings with the contractors and county representative, keeping

up with any necessary documents associated with the project and offering assistance to any of the other employees working on the project.

At the beginning of this work detail, 8 to 10 contracts were still active on the Virgin and Santa Clara Rivers and on Ash and La Verkin Creeks. Contracts were typically of 30 to 45 days in duration with some limitations associated with permits from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the Army Corps of Engineers.

While our group only worked on the construction phase of this process, it was obvious that a project of this size could have only have been accomplished by a lot of hard work by the Utah NRCS staff along with the employees of Washington County and other agency personnel. The work consisted of long hours— however the experience of working in a team environment with our fellow Utah NRCS employees was very rewarding. We were treated well.

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Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) Grassland Project Plan Update

Submitted by Ray Cragar

In the February 2005 News and Views, Ray Cragar, Grassland Specialist, described a Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) Grassland Project Plan. He provides a status report of the project.

In May and June of 2005, plots of seven different varieties or experimental accessions of bermudagrass were sown and sprigged. Soils, elevation, average rainfall, and temperature are substantially different at the sites in north central and eastern West Virginia: (Taylor, Mineral, and Jefferson Counties). The project purpose is to determine what trial varieties are winter-hardy and capable of providing forage during the hot, dry summer period. During this time, cool-season species tend to lose quality and quantity because the growth rate slows.

In late summer of 2005 and in late spring of 2006

- Each site was evaluated for
 - percent composition of each variety compared to weedy competition in each plot
 - vigor
 - height
- Soil temperatures were monitored
- Prescribed site preparation was attempted
- Plantings were installed

The seven varieties/accessions and source of origin are:

Varieties/ Accessions	Type	Origin
'Quickstand'	sprigs	Alderson, WV Plant Materials Center
'Riata'	seed	Johnston Seed Company, Enid, OK
JE-III	seed	Johnston Seed Company, Enid, OK
'Wrangler'	seed	Johnston Seed Company, Enid, OK
KF-777	seed	K-F Seeds, Brawley, CA
'KF-194'	seed	K-F Seeds, Brawley, CA
KF-000	seed	K-F Seeds, Brawley, CA

The goal is to determine over-wintering ability, stand longevity, forage quality, and production potential. Following is the current performance status of each variety or accessions from each site.

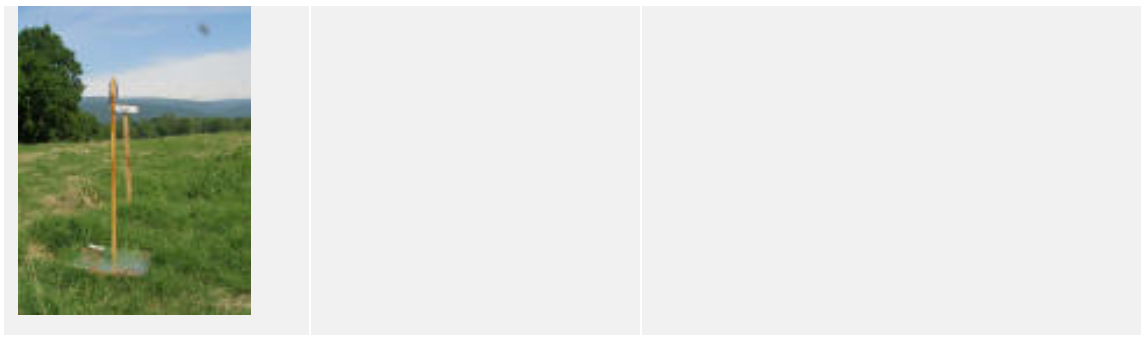
Taylor County, MLRA 126 and 127: small trees and shrubs mechanically removed from steep, southerly exposure planting site in late April, 2005; raked, disked, and packed prior to sprigging on May 19 and seeding on June 6. The six seeded varieties germinated fairly uniformly and became established, to varying degrees, going into the winter. Following are the results of a late spring, 2006 evaluation:

- The 'Quickstand' suffered from severe weedy competition and low sprig survival rate and resulted in discovery of less than 1% plot composition, poor vigor, and little indication of spreading.
- Of the six seeded varieties/accessions, KF-777 and 'Riata' showed the best plot composition at 20% and 10% respectively. However, 'Wrangler,' with only about a 5% stand, is the most vigorous and aggressive.

Mineral County, MLRA 127 and 147: bottomland site, renovated pasture, excellent site-preparation and installation conditions. 'Quickstand' sprigs installed on May 18, 2005; remaining six broadcast-seeded on June 1.

- The 'Quickstand' plot suffered from severe horse nettle and tall crabgrass infestation, and poor sprig establishment performance. However, the June, 2006 evaluation showed it to be 10 – 15% composition of the plot, exhibiting impressive vigor, and indicating a tendency to spread.
- The six seeded varieties/accessions all seem to have survived the winter in good shape and have begun growing/spreading. The JE-III and the 'Wrangler' are the top two performers to date, both with roughly 95% plot composition, excellent vigor, and 6" and 9-1/2" top-growth height respectively.

Photo June 6, 2006	Varieties/ Accessions	Origin
	'Quickstand'	Alderson, WV Plant Materials Center
	JE-III	Johnston Seed Company, Enid, OK
 	'Wrangler'	Johnston Seed Company, Enid, OK
	KF-000	K-F Seeds, Brawley, CA



Jefferson County, MLRA 147: This site was extremely dry when establishment was attempted; therefore, little bermudagrass seed germinated and the sprigs seem not to have survived. Mechanical site preparation was accomplished just prior to installation of plots, with no herbicide application for control of competition. Crabgrass came on strong and overwhelmed the site. Towards the end of the growing season virtually no bermudagrass was to be found in the plots; therefore, the decision was made to re-attempt establishment during the spring of 2006. Due to logistical problems, seed was not procured so now we are looking at spring of 2007, utilizing no-till technology with extensive site preparation/weed control this fall prior to installation.

Again, the major interest in this project is to determine if bermudagrass is winter-hardy this far north, persistent, and able to fill a niche as a warm-season perennial grass species for summer grazing. The indications are promising at this time, at least on some soils and sites in Appalachia that have had prescribed site preparation and management. The 2005–2006 winter was fairly mild so the plants have not been severely tested. The plots will be monitored, management will be adjusted according to conditions, and additional data must be collected before any conclusions about the usefulness of bermudagrass in this region of the United States can be reached.

For more information, contact Ray Cragar, Grassland Specialist at the [Philippi-East Area Office](#).

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West Virginia Livestock Producers Meet at High Mountain Pasture

A recent pasture walk was held at Allegany Farms, operated by Joe and Carolyn Harper near Seneca Rocks, West Virginia. This mountaintop pasture walk was sponsored by the West Virginia Forage and Grassland Council, Potomac Valley Conservation District, Tygarts Valley Conservation District, West Virginia Shepherds Federation, along with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) . There were close to 80 participants, including West Virginia sheep and cattle producers, organizations, university, and agency representatives.

Educational sessions included:

- high-elevation grassland management
- options for predator control
- multi-species grazing
- conservation practices
- aerial fertilization

The participants rode hay wagons to a high mountain pasture at a 4000- foot elevation on the eastern continental divide where over 400 ewes and lambs were grazing. The Harpers are also running 70 steers on this property.

The Harper family provided a West Virginia lamb roast buffet for their guests on a ridge top overlooking the South Branch valley to the east and the Cheat River headwaters to the west.

Guests at this pasture walk were Congresswoman Shelly Moore Capito (R) Second District West Virginia and her spouse Charlie. Congresswoman Capito enjoyed her visit and the lunch.



Congresswoman Shelly Moore Capito and host Joe Harper.

Those present agreed that this pasture walk provided an opportunity for federal and state agency representatives, educators, sheep and beef producers to get together in a friendly way to talk about issues that concern them.

For more information, contact [Doris Brackenrich](#) at the [Franklin Service Center](#).

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West Virginia NRCS Employee Recognized by USACE



Laura Davis, Soil Conservation Technician at the Beckley Service Center, was awarded the Commander's Award for Civilian Service. The award was made by Colonel Charles O. Smithers III, District Engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Memphis, TN.

This award is given for demonstrated initiative and skill in devising new or improved equipment or work methods; leadership in performing assigned duties; and rendered professional or public relations service which resulted in considerable favorable publicity in the local area. Laura was

commended for serving as a QA Team Leader for the Debris Removal Mission for the Louisiana Recovery Field Office in support of the response and recovery effort for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. During the period 31 October 2005 through 29 December 2005, she exhibited energy and knowledge while supporting the mission. Her work ethic, professionalism and leadership and management abilities were significant factors in the success of the Jefferson Parish recovery efforts. Her outstanding performance and contributions reflect selfless devotion to duty and reflect great credit upon her, the LA-RFO, and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.



The award consists of 2 medals, lapel button and citation certificate. The Commander's Award for Civilian Service is comparable to the military Army Commendation Medal.

The star denotes leadership and alludes to the commander. The triangles refer to civilian service, three triangles in this instance, allude to integrity, steadfastness and accomplishment.

For more information on Laura's Louisiana experience see [Katrina Clean Up](#) in the February 2006 *News and Views*.

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West Virginia NRCS Employees Assisting Across the Nation

Name	Home Unit	Location	Agency	Assignment	Date
Gary Redden	Beckley - South Area Office	UT	NRCS	EWP	June 5 30-60 days
Tom Tamasco	Morgantown State Office	LA	NRCS	EWP	June 19 30-60 days
LaRae Baker	Mt. Clare Service Center	MD	NRCS	General	June 12 30-60 days
Carol Lagodich	WV State Office	UT	BLM	PIO2 Bull Complex	July 4-8

Upcoming

Carol Lagodich	WV State Office	National Incident Information Center	USDA Forest Service	PIO2	Sept. 15-Oct. 1
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The Right Skills in the Right Location

The NRCS Strategic Plan has the management goal to manage our human capital strategically to ensure the right skill in the right location to deliver high quality products and services.

NRCS' primary assets are the knowledge, skills, and dedication of our employees. Our success depends upon our people's technical expertise and ability to work effectively with an increasingly diverse clientele. The core NRCS technical workforce must continue to possess technical expertise in a wide range of disciplines. Our need for leadership and management skills will increase as we work to bring a wider range of interests and partners together in science-based, interdisciplinary efforts to get conservation on the land.



West Virginia NRCS employees are detailed around the country sharing and gaining skills.

(Click on posters to enlarge)

West Virginia benefits by:



- Improving and/or keeping employee skills up to date.
- The on-the-job training will be put to use in West Virginia. Most details lasted 30 to 60 days.
- Employees experience other work methods.
- Employees expand their technical contacts.

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Education

WV Save Our Streams (SOS)

Save Our Streams (SOS) is a national watershed education and outreach program. The WV Save Our Streams [web page](#) is revised. Most of the PDF documents and manuals have not changed, however there are several new additions. Some notable documents include a *Field Guide to Macroinvertebrates*, an *Alternate Survey Method Manual* and Data Sheet, and *Guidelines for Preparing a Stream Study Design*.

In the links and other documents section at the bottom of the page are several new links, which are good study and resource materials. They include a *Stream Study Guide*, *Macroinvertebrate Identification*, *Listening to Watersheds*, *Stream Morphology* and many others.

To download the documents, click-on the icons to the right. In the links section, simply click-on the link. Please note that many of these resources are PDF files that are rather large, so download times can be long without a high speed connection.

What is the West Virginia Save Our Streams program?

The West Virginia Save Our Streams program is a volunteer monitoring program that trains West Virginia citizens of all ages, how to monitor, and become watchdogs over their local wadeable streams and rivers. WV Save Our Streams uses a streamside biological approach to monitoring, which involves collecting a series of benthic macroinvertebrate samples, sorting, counting and identifying the collections, and calculating a stream index score, which consists of a variety of metrics used to assign a biological integrity rating to the station. This information, along with the assessment of the physical, chemical and habitat conditions, provides the volunteer with enough information to make a general assessment of their stream station. By monitoring additional stations along the stream, the volunteers can make an assessment of the overall health of the watershed.

For more information, contact:

Timothy Craddock, Citizens Monitoring Coordinator

West Virginia Save Our Streams Program

601 57th Street, SE

Charleston, WV 25304

Office: 304-926-0499 (1040)

Mobile: 304-389-7630

E-mail: tcraddock@wvdep.org

<http://www.wvdep.org/item.cfm?ssid=11&ss1id=202>

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Useful Web Links

WV Rural Development Newsletter

Find out what Rural Development is doing. See the July *Almost Heaven WV Mountain State Rural Express*.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv/Almost%20Heaven%20WV%20Mountain%20State%20Rural%20Express%20July%202006.pdf>

Dust, Drought, Degradation, Desperation & the Great Depression

Submitted by Tim Prescott

Bob Parkinson, the Ohio State GIS/Resource Inventory Coordinator compiled a pictorial, musical & historical essay on soil erosion, its impact on America during the Dust Bowl of the 1930's, the beginnings of a conservation agency, and the need for factual natural resource information.

The following documents require [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) or [Microsoft PowerPoint](#).



[The Dust Bowl and Beyond](#) (14 MB) (To hear the background music, both files [PDF and companion winamp media file] must reside in the same directory so the music will automatically play when "View Show" is invoked).



[The Dust Bowl and Beyond](#) (3 MB) (View slides without music)

New Soils Posters Available from LANDCARE

The following two posters are now available through the LANDCARE Web page: <http://landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.



1. **Soil-Global Soil Regions Poster**

This poster is a world map showing the distribution of the 12 Orders of Soil Taxonomy. The map legend includes photos of soil profiles and a description of each soil order. Poster size is 55" X 36". (2006)



2. **Soil-History of Science for Soil Survey Poster**

A History of Science for Soil Survey in the United States Poster. In conjunction with the 2006 World Congress of Soil Science in Philadelphia, PA, this poster reviews the history of selected scientific endeavors associated with soil survey activities in the U. S. The format is a timeline with generalized decadal summaries and specific events and years for each decade. The poster contains historical photographs, graphics, and tables to illustrate spatial and temporal trends. Poster size is 56" X 45".

These posters have been restricted to 5 copies per order by the NHQ Soils Department.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Water Program Website



Land Grant Universities in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia and USDAs Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension System (CSREES), working with EPA Region III, have formed a partnership to advance water quality protection and restoration efforts in the Mid-Atlantic by providing water quality science support, training and education. Partnerships are also being developed with NRCS, USGS, river basin commissions and non-governmental organizations.

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/waterqual/>

The PLANTS Gallery



The PLANTS Gallery emphasizes photos and line drawings of U.S. plants but also contains many cultivated or foreign taxa. The PLANTS Image Gallery has been redesigned and enhanced. Search the Gallery by Artist, Image Location, State Distribution, Copyright Status, and more! Improved View and Sort options let you look at 15, 25, 50, or 100 thumbnail images per page. Best of all, synonym names are searched, too.

<http://plants.usda.gov/gallery.html>

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Bits and Pieces

Bruce Knight to be the U.S. agriculture undersecretary in charge of implementing a nationwide livestock tracking system

The Senate confirmed Bruce Knight to be the U.S. agriculture undersecretary in charge of implementing a nationwide livestock tracking system, a safeguard against mad cow and other dangerous animal diseases.

The Bush administration embraced the livestock tracking system as one of its major responses to the discovery of the first U.S. case of mad cow disease in December 2003. But it does not expect to have the voluntary system fully operational until 2009.

Morgantown Parking Allocation



Nikki Moody, Dick Judy, and Diana Rivas draw names.

There wasn't the usual anticipation for Morgantown State Office employees annual parking space allocation. This year, for the first time, every employee who applied was granted a space. The first 24 drawn are awarded the prized covered parking in the basement. The next cut is for spaces on the back loading dock.

There are also a few extra spaces for visitors. If you are coming to the state office, call Roseanne Kennedy at 304-284-7545 to check on availability.

Backyard Conservation Invitations

The National Audubon Society and NRCS have produced five educational posters aimed at individuals interested in managing their personal landscapes for birds, bats, and butterflies. These posters support NRCS's "Backyard Conservation" campaign, as well as Audubon's "Audubon At Home" Program.

- An Invitation to a Healthy Yard
- An Invitation to a Healthy Schoolyard
- An Invitation to a Healthy Neighborhood
- An Invitation to a Healthy Country Home
- An Invitation to a Healthy Apartment.

Each 8½ x 11-inch publication opens to an 11 x 17-inch poster. The series provides guidelines on how to create healthy yards, apartments, schoolyards, neighborhoods, and country homes. The posters and related Web sites feature tips for attracting and supporting wildlife, whether in large or small areas, including urban areas, suburban lots, larger land parcels, or broader community landscapes.

You may order the posters through <http://landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov/>, by e-mailing landcare@usda.gov, or by calling 1-888-526-3227. The posters, as well as other NRCS Backyard Conservation information, also are available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/>.

Updated Letterhead and Guidance for using NRCS' New Mission Statement.

During the past year, NRCS gradually has adopted the phrase "Helping People Help the Land" in its public communications. This is the new NRCS official mission statement and has been added to the NRCS letterhead.

"Helping People Help the Land" replaces the former mission statement, "The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment," as well as other slogans and taglines that have been used in the past. Wording from the former mission statement may be used in text, but must no longer be identified as the Agency's mission statement.

"Helping People Help the Land" provides a succinct, easily remembered description of the work we perform, and provides technical and financial assistance to help our customers care for the land.

Because our mission statement is an integral part of the Agency's identity, it should appear on our public information materials, whenever possible, as a separate element from the Agency symbol and name.

Diana Doerr updated the WV letterhead, memorandum, bulletin letterhead and newly added Speed Memo on the WV NRCS Web Page at the following link: <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/wvletterhead.html>.

Please change the address to your office address and phone. This can be completed through the Header and Footer of the word document and then save as on your computer for future use.

Source: National Bulletin 260-6-5

WV NRCS Web

An average of 529 users visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/> per day.

Average Visit Duration 00:31:46

Median Visit Duration 00:05:25

International Visits 5.88%

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Meet



Diana Rivas

I was born in Colombia, South America, where I grew up. When I was 15 years old, my family moved to the U.S. because of the political situation of the country, and looking for new and better opportunities.

I currently live in Fort Lauderdale, Florida where I am a senior student at the Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. I am majoring in Civil Engineering and will graduate this fall 2006. During the summer 2004 I was granted a Public Service Leader's Scholarship with the USDA in Washington D.C, where I was offered, along with 8 other scholars across the nation including Puerto Rico, the opportunity to earn NRCS experience through a summer internship as a student trainee, and the possibility to follow a career within the NRCS after graduation. In my free time, I enjoy going to the beach, running, and watching a good movie.

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Retirements

Nikki Moody, Program Assistant for Management Services



Nikki's NRCS career is as varied as her federal career. She served as a

- Personnel Clerk
- Clerk Typist
- Secretary for Water Resources
- Program Assistant in Contracting - Management Staff.

The garden accessories Nikki received as gifts will be put to good use this summer.

Nikki took on extra activities—including the CFC, preparing for the annual parking allocation, making sure copy machines have plenty of paper, and the unpopular but necessary job of cleaning the refrigerator.

July 1970 - May 1976	Dept of Army, Office of Personnel Operations (later USA Military Personnel Center)	Washington, DC
May 1976 - December 1977	SDOI Bureau of Mines	Bruceton, PA
December 1977 - May 1978	USDOL Mining Enforcement & Safety Administration	Bruceton, PA
August - Dec 1979	USDOL Mine Safety & Health Administration	Bruceton, PA
December 1979 - August 1985	USDOE Energy Technology Center	Morgantown
August 1987	USDA Soil Conservation Service/ NRCS	Morgantown

Lowell Wilks, Great Kanawha Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator



Lowell receives the traditional Fenton vase from Greg Kist. Pat Bowen is looking on.

Lowell majored in Forestry and graduated from WVU in 1976. He started his SCS career as a Soil Conservation Technician in Beaver, PA. He quickly progressed to a Soil Conservationist job in Martinsburg WV, in 1977. He held District Conservationist positions in Berkeley Springs and Ranson before becoming a RC&D Coordinator in 1987. Lowell was the RC&D Coordinator in Scott Depot, Hurricane, and Cross Lanes, WV.

Lowell was in the U.S. Navy and served in Vietnam. He also served in the Navy Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, and West Virginia Air National Guard.

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